

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 032513

SUBJECT: VOA RUSSIAN BROADCASTS

ATTN: P AND C SECTION

FOLLOWING IS CONTINGENCY GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR USESON
IF-ASKED BASIS IN RESPONSE TO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS ON
AP MOSCOW STORY ON VOA RUSSIAN BROADCASTS:

Q. IS IT TRUE THAT THERE HAS BEEN A CLANDESTINE "DEAL"
BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR TO CURTAIL VOA COVERAGE OF
SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN ORDER TO PROTECT DETENTE?

A. THERE HAVE BEEN NO "DEALS", CLANDESTINE OR OTHERWISE,
BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS. THERE HAS
BEEN NO CHANGE IN VOA POLICY REGARDING BROADCASTS TO
THE SOVIET UNION SINCE THE JAMMING STOPPED IN SEPTEMBER
1973.

THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES IN THE FORMAT OF VOA PROGRAMS,
BUT THESE WERE MADE WITH A SINGLE GOAL IN MIND - TO
REACH THE POTENTIALLY LARGER AUDIENCE WITH HIGHER
QUALITY BROADCASTS.

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Q. IS IT TRUE THAT VOA IS NOT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF SOLZHENITSYN'S "GULAG ARCHIPELAGO" "OUT OF REGARD FOR SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS"?

A. NO. AS THE AP STORY SAID, VOA HAS COVERED ALL DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING SOLZHENITSYN, THE PUBLICATION OF HIS BOOK AND HIS SUBSEQUENT EXPULSION THOROUGHLY. IT HAS NEVER BEEN VOA POLICY TO BROADCAST THE FULL TEXT OF BOOKS OR DOCUMENTS.

Q. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE DECREASE OF OVER 60 PERCENT IN VOA COVERAGE OF THE SOVIET UNION AFTER THE USSR STOPPED JAMMING VOA TRANSMISSIONS?

A. IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT A SET OF FIGURES SHOWING PERCENTAGES OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF PROGRAM MATERIALS FOR VOA RUSSIAN BROADCASTS IN LATE AUGUST AND THEN LATE NOVEMBER OF LAST YEAR HAS BEEN MISINTERPRETED TO INDICATE AN APPARENT CHANGE IN POLICY. VOA COVERAGE IS ALWAYS BASED ON THE FLOW OF WORLD-WIDE NEWS DEVELOPMENTS. DURING THE NOVEMBER PERIOD COVERED BY THE SURVEY THERE WAS COMPARATIVELY LESS NEWS COVERAGE OF INTERNAL SOVIET EVENTS THAN IN THE AUGUST PERIOD AND THERE WERE MORE MIDDLE EAST AND ENERGY-RELATED STORIES. THIS REFLECTED WHAT WAS APPEARING IN THE US MEDIA AT THE TWO TIMES. FOR ANOTHER TIME PERIOD, SUCH AS THE PRESENT, THE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION DEVOTED TO INTERNAL SOVIET EVENTS WOULD BE GREATER. KISSINGER

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